policy of no-first-use and a policy of non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. In fact, this meets the demand of unqualified negative security assurances, raised by the large majority of non-nuclear weapon states to ensure their security. India has also indicated readiness to provide requisite assurances to the nuclear-weapon-free-zones in existence or those being negotiated. We have also taken new initiative calling for dealerting of nuclear weapons as a means of reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorised launch.

9. The NPT community needs to understand that India cannot join the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. Statements by NPT States Parties about India rolling back its nuclear programme are mere diversions to prevent focussed attention on the basic goals of the NPT.

10. India's commitment to global nuclear disarmament and lasting non-proliferation remains undiluted. While willing to commence negotiations on Nuclear Weapons Convention, India also remains ready to participate in agreed and irreversible steps to prepare the ground for such negotiations. A global no-first-use agreement and a non-use agreement against non-nuclear weapon states would meet the longstanding requirement for legally binding negative security assurances and assurances to nuclear-weapon-free zones. Another positive development would be a commitment by nuclear weapon states not to deploy nuclear weapons outside their own national territories. Nuclear weapon states also need to take steps to lower the alert status, through gradual de-alerting actions, consistent with policies of no-first-use and the defensive role of nuclear weapons. Tactical weapons that lend themselves to war fighting roles need to be eliminated. These would be some positive and concrete steps in the right direction.

11. India has been a responsible member of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and will continue to take initiatives and work with like-minded countries to bring about stable, genuine and lasting non-proliferation, thus leading to a nuclear-weapon-free- world.

Sino-Russian summit decisions

2648. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the Sino-Russian Summit decisions with respect to the US proposal for the NMD system;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are also aware of the resistance in Europe to this idea as expressed in the recent G-8 Summit;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) Government's position to the NMD proposal in the light of the above views?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b) In the Joint Statement issued during the Sino-Russian Summit in July, both sides have stressed "the fundamental importance of the ABM Treaty as the cornerstone of strategic stability and the basis for cuts in strategic offensive weapons and favour the preservation of the Treaty in its present form." The US ideas on missile defence have not been specifically referred to.

(c) and (d) According to media reports, while the US missile defence proposals came up in bilateral meetings during the Genoa G- 8 Summit, there was no reference to it in the Communique of the Summit.

(e) Does not arise, as the precise details about missile defence plans are yet to be spelt out. On the ABM Treaty, India's opposition to its unilateral abrogation has been made known in official statements.

Release of POW languishing in Pakistani jails

2649. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that still more than 100 prisoners of war are in the custody of Pakistan for more than 25 years;

(b) if so, what measures Government have taken to compel Pakistan to release these prisoners; and

(c) what is the present state of their health?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) As per available information, there are 54 Indian POWs believed to be in Pakistan jails since 1971. Pakistan has been consistently denying the presence of any POWs in its jails. Government have consistently taken up the issue of the release and repatriation of Indian POWs with the Government of Pakistan. Most recently, during his Summit Meeting with President Pervez Musharraf on 15th July, 2001 at Agra, Prime Minister urged the Pakistani President to take urgent and purposeful action for the earliest release and repatriation of these POWs to end the agony of the families of these soldiers.

Visit of Chinese Premier

2650. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM:
SHRI KA. RA. SUBBIAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the issues to be discussed with the Chinese Premier during his visit to India in November, 2001;